

**REPORT
OF THE
AGRICULTURAL MATTERS
EVALUATION COMMITTEE**



**Indiana Legislative Services Agency
200 W. Washington St., Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789**

November, 1999

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Agricultural Matters Evaluation Committee

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**John Rowings
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A copy of this report is available on the Internet. Reports, minutes, and notices are organized by committee. This report and other documents for this Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.state.in.us/legislative/>.

INFORMATION REPORT

Agricultural Matters Evaluation Committee

I. STATUTORY DIRECTIVE

This Committee was originally established in 1997 to study issues related to agriculture with special attention to the following: (1) Drainage with particular attention to be paid to the issue of county control over dredged ditches until the ditch empties into a stream; (2) Cooperative Extension Service with particular attention paid to the possibility of expanding services provided to areas such as medical planning and child care; and (3) Indiana Heritage Trust Program with particular attention paid to the impact on local government and the issue of maintenance of purchased property.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM

The Committee met three times during the 1999 interim session on September 15 (at the State House), October 6 (Peru, IN), and October 21 (Scottsburg, IN).

The Committee is not required to file a final report.

III. COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee voted (with 7 yes and zero no votes) to recommend to the General Assembly the following legislative proposals:

PD3513 (Purchase or Transfer of Developmental Rights) authorizes local plan commissions to purchase conservation easements to assure the availability of land for agricultural use. The bill also provides that a zoning ordinance may permit the transfer of development rights between parcels of land.

PD3486 (Funding Conservation Easements for Farmland) adds the Lt. Governor, or his designee, to the Indiana Heritage Trust Project Committee and establishes a Conservation Easement Account within the Indiana Heritage Trust Fund to be used to purchase conservation easements to assure the availability of land for agricultural uses. The bill provides that 10% of the balance in the fund is to be allocated to the new account. It also reduces the portion of the fund allocated to the Discretionary Account from 50% to 40%.

Meeting minutes for the Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.state.in.us/legislative/>.